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Belville, Jacob.

Address:

*Battle of the
Crooked Billet.*

Doylestown, Pa.

1862

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ADDRESS

AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE

HATBOROUGH MONUMENT,

COMMEMORATING THE

BATTLE OF THE CROOKED BILLET,

DELIVERED IN LOLLER ACADEMY,

December 5, 1861.

BY REV. JACOB BELVILLE.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE MONUMENTAL ASSOCIATION.

DOYLESTOWN, PA. :

W. W. H. DAVIS, PRINTER.

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DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE HATBOROUGH MONUMENT,

COMMEMORATING THE

BATTLE OF THE CROOKED BILLET,

BY REV. JACOB BELVILLE.

A LITTLE more than a year ago, you were assembled to witness the inauguration of the Hatboro' Monumental Association. To-day, you assembled to witness the completion of the work, for which that association was organized. And now, to me has been given the honor of announcing to you that that work is done. It is well done;—in a manner worthy of this community, worthy of the association, and worthy of the events which that work is designed to commemorate.

Another monument has been erected to departed worth. Another spot has been consecrated to the memory of precious dust and priceless souls. Another stone has been set up, to witness that good deeds cannot die. Another tribute has been paid to that virtue which men in every age have ranked next to the love of God,—*the love of Country*. Another record has been written in enduring marble, to plead with silent eloquence, for the perpetuation of that government for whose establishment our fathers bled, and to command our children and our children's children, that they hand down to their children that heritage our fathers gave us, and which, by the grace of God,* we intend to hand down unimpaired to them.

It is not my province to-day, to search the field of history and portray before you the events which your monument is designed to commemorate. Those events have already been recorded by an abler pen* than mine, and a more eloquent tongue† than mine has rehearsed them in your ears; and

* History of Battle of Crooked Billet, by Colonel W. W. H. Davis.

† Oration by Colonel J. W. Forney, July 4, 1860.

as the result of that record and rehearsal, those events are familiar to you all as household words. As you have gathered together here to-day, the battle of the Crooked Billet has been in imagination fought again. You have seen that little band of undisciplined yet patriotic men, with Lacey at their head, by the faithlessness of sentinels, and the treachery of their own countrymen, surprised at morning dawn by more than thrice their number of veteran troops. You have seen the enemy closing in upon them, from right and left and rear and front—you have seen Downey, and Thompson, and Pinyard fall—you have seen Lacey with more than half his force break through the opposing foe, and make good his retreat; and, when your eye has followed them for a moment to a place of security, you have returned to look on scenes of cruelty, over which even the charity of an enemy would fain throw the mantle of oblivion.

It is mine, to-day, rather to read to you again the lessons your fathers wrote upon these fields with their blood;—to gather, from the breezes that play around this consecrated spot, the warnings and counsels that have been floating in them ever since they were breathed upon them by the spirits that departed here in the struggle for liberty. It is mine, to strike the key note of the monument, to interpret its history and its inscriptions, that it may at once begin its holy mission, by awaking the impulses of patriotism in our hearts.

This monument is a tribute of gratitude, *a witness that good deeds cannot die*. The Bard of Avon said, "the evil that men do, lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." It is not true;—evil and good are alike immortal. There are good deeds which so enwrap much that is evil, that the eye of man never beholds it, and there are evil deeds which cover a character with a dye of infamy so deep that an eternity of goodness could not wash it out. The predominant good or evil, in an individual, a nation, a generation, stamps its character for ever.

Good deeds live in the memory. Eighty three years have passed since the events occurred which we this day commemorate. Their memory is as green to day, as when those years began, and in view of subsequent events, they have assumed a magnitude they did not then possess.

Good deeds not only live in memory—they are immortal in their influence— they are like seeds which spring up, a leaf, a twig, a tree, which every year spreads wider its branches and bears in richer luxuriance its fruits. The outbursts of patriotism to day, throughout our land, is the ripe clusters from the vine our fathers planted and watered with their blood. The patriots, to whose memory your monument is reared, are doing more for their country to-day than when they died. The blood they shed upon these fields is more powerful to *preserve* our liberty, than it was to *procure* it. It nerves our spirits to endurance in the nation's holy cause, and ministers a withering rebuke to every cold heart and hesitating hand.

But I have said that evil is immortal, no less than good. And there are evil deeds remembered here to-day. The men of the Revolution were not all patriots. The very service to which Lacey with his band was appointed, testifies that there were traitors then. He was appointed to protect his country from his countrymen, to prevent the citizens of America from sup-

plying to England's hired army the strength which was to be spent in laying waste her cities, desolating her fields, and polluting her homes with blood. And yet, I confess, fellow citizens, that I have always looked upon many of the Tories of the Revolution with much of pity, and on many of their deeds of service to the mother country with somewhat of extenuation. Though they were traitors to their country, they were loyal to the government under which they had been born—they resisted a government which was then a new experiment. Still, they will be remembered and execrated as traitors, while a single monument shall stand to tell of the struggles of the Revolution. Who then shall pity the traitors of our day? Who shall extenuate *their* treason? They need no monument to perpetuate their disgrace. The men of America who look on with cold indifference upon the struggle in which we are now engaged, who are not ready to lay their all upon their country's altar in this her time of peril, are writing the history of their own shame as with an iron pen—they are handing down to their children a heritage of infamy. Their children's children will abjure their names.

Your monument is a *tribute to patriotism*, a virtue which, as I have already said, has, in the esteem of the good of every age, ranked second only to the love of God. Who are the men whose names are handed down to us in sacred history encircled with a God given glory? Who were Moses and Joshua, Deborah and Gideon, Samson and Samuel, David and Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah and Josiah? Who, but patriots, who loved their God and loved their country. Their patriotism and their piety stand side by side upon the sacred page. They served their country in serving God, and they served God in serving their country. And almost every record of their faith in God, is also a record of some brave and noble deed for the land they loved. When they prayed, it was for grace and strength to serve their country; and then, gifted by Jehovah with a self sacrificing patriotism, they counted nothing too dear to sacrifice upon the altar of their country and their God.

The school boys here will well remember the story of Volumnia, the mother of Caius Marcius Coriolanus. An exile from Rome, Caius Marcius had joined the Volscians. He was appointed commander of their forces, and now flushed with victory after victory he was at the head of a powerful army almost at the gates of Rome. Deputation after deputation went forth from the city. Senators, Pontiffs, Flamens, Augurs, all went forth to intercede with Coriolanus to spare the city, but all in vain. The women, true to the instincts of that piety which in every age has characterized their sex, were gathered in the temple to pray. At length Volumnia rose up, and with her Valeria, the wife of Coriolanus, and her children, and went forth to his camp to intercede for Rome. He saw them approaching, knew them, and resolved to steel his heart against their entreaties too. But he loved his mother better than his country, and as she drew near he rose to greet her with a kiss. Though she was his mother, she shrank from the pollution of a traitor's kiss. "Art thou Caius Marcius," said she, "and am I thy mother, or art thou the leader of the Volscians and am I thy foe?" "*Answer me this, before thou kissest me.*" "Shall it be said that it is to me—to me alone—that Rome owes her conqueror and oppressor?" *Had I never been a mother, my*

country had still been free." No wonder that Caius Marcius quailed before the bursting patriotism of that noble mother's heart. No wonder that he cried, "Oh, my mother, thou hast saved thy country, but lost thy son." No wonder that he went back to the Volscians and died the victim of his double treason. Her's was a genuine patriotism that looked on every earthly tie as nothing when compared with that which bound her to her country, that overshadowed even the instincts of a mother's love. This is the patriotism that has commanded the reverence of true men in every age. This makes us bow before the hero of Fort Sumpter. He sacrificed the ties of family to serve his country. This invests with a peculiar interest the services of Fairfax, in the capture of those arch-rebels from the deck of the Trent. He is a Virginian, bound to the enemies of his country by the ties of blood, but bound to that country by stronger ties, by all the noble impulses of his patriotic heart. This is true patriotism; it rises above all considerations of interest; it tramples on the dictates of ambition; it turns a deaf ear to the voice of friends and kindred. It counts no labor a toil, no endurance a suffering, no loss a sacrifice, if the country be but thereby served. It knows no limit, but the law of God; and there it always finds a refuge, for God is the patriot's God.

But wherefore should a man love his country? I might tell you that it is the residence and the guardian of all his dearest interests; that it is the protection which government affords which preserves not only our liberties, but our homes and our altars; that without it the domestic circle would soon lose its charm, and the temples of religion would be razed to the ground; that rapine and violence would soon make a hell of earth. But true patriotism rests upon a foundation deeper far than any considerations of interest or advantage. I am weary of that mathematical philosophy which would calculate love to country and love to God by the pennyweight; it would sell God and the country for a very few pieces of silver. True patriotism has its foundation in the God-like nature which the Creator first gave to man. Why does every true man love his country? Why does the eye, not blinded by disease, love beauty? Because it is its nature. Why does the ear that is not deaf, delight in melody? Because God made it so. Even so the man that is a man, in whom sin has not utterly obliterated every element of his moral nature, loves his country, because God made him so. It is the necessary requirement of the primary instincts of his soul.

The men to whom this monument is reared, were *patriots*. They did not achieve, it is true, what the world calls great deeds, deeds which at once would write their names upon the roll of fame. But they did the greatest deed man can do for his country, they died in its defence. They stood in their lot, between their country and her foes. They fought until they fell the victims of treachery and violence, all that the bravest and the best could do. It is sometimes said that circumstances make great men. It is true, but they must have the material and the time. The Revolution would never have made a Washington, if it had not had a Washington to make him of. Nor yet would the world have ever known the Washington it does, had not God granted a long life for the development of his greatness. They say, the world has seen but one Washington. But one was spared, 'tis true, but

many an embryo Washington may have yielded up his life on the fields of the Revolution. There may have been a Washington in patriotism, in courage, in every element of greatness, among that little band, to whose memory you have erected your monument to-day. Many a Washington may be doing duty in the ranks to-day—some may already have gone to their long home in the struggle in which we are now engaged, whose names will never be known to fame. Let your monuments ever be reared, not so much to great deeds as to brave and loyal hearts, that, in the holy atmosphere that surrounds them, your children may breathe the inspiration of true patriotism, and before them swear eternal fidelity to their country, if not eternal hatred to its foes.

But I have said, the monument is a plea for the Republic. I confess I blush with shame to utter words like these—a *plea* for such a government as ours? When I preach the gospel there is one service which always mantles my cheek with shame—to plead with *man* to love his *God*—with such poor worms as we to love a being such as the great and good Jehovah. Even so, with reverence I say it, I blush to plead with the citizens of America, with men who know what it cost to establish this government, who have experienced its beneficence and know something of its value, to plead with such to preserve and not destroy it.

In the original draught of Washington's Farewell Address, now in the possession of James Lenox, of New York, is this paragraph, which does not appear in the printed copies:

"Besides the more serious causes already hinted as threatening the existence of our Union, there is one less dangerous, but sufficiently dangerous to make it prudent to be upon our guard against it. I allude to the petulance of party differences of opinion. It is not uncommon to hear the irritations which these excite, vent themselves in declarations that the different parts of the United States are ill-affected to each other, in menaces that the Union will be dissolved by this or that measure. Intimations like these are as indiscreet as they are intemperate. Though frequently made with levity and without any really evil intention, they have a tendency to produce the consequence which they indicate. They teach the minds of men to consider the Union as precarious; as an object to which they ought not to attach their hopes and fortunes, and thus chill the sentiment in its favor. By alarming the pride of those to whom they are addressed, they set ingenuity at work to depreciate the value of the thing, and to discover reasons of indifference towards it. This is not wise. It will be much wiser to habituate ourselves to *reverence* the Union as the palladium of our national happiness; to accommodate constantly our words and actions to that idea, and to discountenance whatever may suggest a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned."

Opposite this paragraph on the margin these words are written in Washington's own hand—"Not important enough." He would not insult the true men of his day by warning them further than he had already done, against a thought entertained only by the lowest demagogues. He little thought that in our day a mighty host would be gathered on the soil of his own Virginia, some bearing his own honored name, to destroy that govern-

ment to the establishment of which he consecrated his life. He little thought that, within sight of his own grave, a youthful warrior, burning with the fire of his own patriotic spirit, would be ruthlessly murdered for flinging to the breeze his country's flag. He little thought that ere the men of his day were in their graves, the work of his life would be the mockery of madmen, the plaything of fools. And yet though to-day there still stands before you one who was born in the midst of the perils of the Revolution, wedded in youth to the daughter of him who led the little band to whose memory you have erected your monument,* already six hundred thousand men are under arms at the call of this government to protect it from the assaults of those who have lived in peace under its protection and have grown many and mighty under its fostering care. And wherefore this deadly assault on this most beneficent government?—this government which has cherished all its citizens of every section and of every class, as no other government ever did on earth?—this government under which science and the arts, literature and religion alike have flourished, which, in the ordinary and natural working of its plans, bestows on every citizen alike honors and rewards which pale the light of the titles and honors which kings dispense to a favored few?—this government against which even the mad malice of rebellion dare not utter aught of evil but misgivings for the future? Alas! my fellow citizens, the prediction which Washington dared not to breathe is fulfilled. A multitude, of those who have inherited the fruits of his self-sacrificing life have sunk to a depth of infamy, his noble nature could not sound. “The petulance of party differences of opinion,” has done its work. The ballot-box, in the legitimate exercise of its constitutional functions, has dethroned one party and enthroned another. And under what plea does this iniquitous rebellion marshal its hosts? Because of fears, well-founded fears, that the powers of this Government, under its present administration, will not be prostituted to the extension and perpetuation of slavery, an institution, which has ever been regarded by the civilized and Christian world as a dark blot upon the record of our fame; an institution of which Washington himself thus wrote in language worthy of himself and worthy of his struggles in the cause of human freedom:—“I never mean, unless some particular circumstances compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery, in this country, may be abolished by law.” “I wish from my soul that the Legislature of this State (Virginia) could see the policy of a gradual abolition of slavery.” To perpetuate and extend this institution, to nationalize it and make “owned” labor the great characteristic of the Government is the great aim of those who, to accomplish these humiliating ends, have banded to destroy a government whose tendencies have ever been to universal freedom. We wage no war on slavery. Its constitutional rights were secured by the solemn oath of one who never broke his oath. It wages war on us and on our Government to obtain guarantees for the future which were never given by any Constitution under Heaven—security for

* Dr. Darlington, of West Chester, who married the daughter of General Lacey, was present at the erection of the monument.

the perpetuity of its tyranny. This must be granted or the Republic shall fall—so rebellion has decreed. And was it for this God opened in this western world a refuge for the oppressed of every land?—was it for this that Liberty raised here her standard, and fought and won the battles of the Revolution, that here might be established a nursery of slavery?—that Religion might sanctify the tyrant's chains and baptize them as a holy thing?—that we and our children might throw back into our fathers' teeth their own declaration, that "all men were created free and equal"?—and have we grown so great that we can afford to take from under us our very foundations? On the contrary, this land belongs to Liberty. The spirit of Liberty first settled it, the spirit of Liberty rescued it through seas of blood from the rule of kings. If the Republic fall, I will not say that Liberty must fall. No! Liberty is of God, and it will live to wave its banner over every tyrant's grave; but if this Republic fall, then exiled Liberty once more must seek another home, perhaps on Africa's long neglected soil.

But it must not fall. The monument you have erected to-day is another plea for its perpetuity. It points you back to the wild woods, and humble, scattered dwellings, by which this spot was surrounded in revolutionary times, and then as it surveys the cultivated fields, the cheerful homes and smiling villages, which now surround it, it tells of the beneficence of that government which under God has been the author of this prosperity not only here but in every portion of this mighty land.

The history which it hands down reminds us that this free government was bought with blood, and fires us all with devotion to resolve,—*it shall never be sold for less.*

But you need no monument to plead with you. I see, before me, men of every party, Republicans, and Democrats alike;—adherents of him who passed from earth, with patriotic warnings and counsels on his dying lips, amid the first bursting of the storm, and those who once were adherents of him who, now a despicable traitor, dishonors one of Kentucky's noblest names. You know no party now, but the party of your country. You are Americans all—animated by one spirit, the spirit thus breathed by our own poet:

"Our Country calls, away, away,
To where the blood-stream blots the green,
Strike to defend the mildest sway
That time in all her course has seen;
See, from a thousand coverts, see
Spring the armed foes that haunt her track;
They aim to strike her down, and we
Must beat the banded traitors back.
Few, few were they whose swords, of old,
Won the fair land in which we dwell,
But we are many, we who hold
The firm resolve to guard it well.
Strike for this broad and happy land
Blow after blow, till men shall see
That might and right go hand in hand,
And glorious must their triumph be."

The decree has gone forth—"the Union shall be preserved." A solemn oath has been breathed before the great Jehovah, and His blessing sought in faith and obedience upon it. They tell us that our foes have asked God's blessing, and that they pray with faith, but it is a faith not honored by

Two

obedience. They trust in vain Jehovah's promise, who defy His law. But we have sought His blessing in the maintenance of right. Fathers, sons, husbands, brothers, are already in the field, ready to win the patriot's reward, victory or an honored grave. And we are left, all ready to obey, whenever our country calls. If we are true to ourselves, our cause, and our God, we cannot fail. God never laid such broad and deep foundations, as He has laid in this fair land, merely to amuse the universe with their destruction. Surely God has not given man the cup of liberty, that, just as he begins to drink, He may dash it in derision from his lips. God is no trifler, nor yet is He the advocate of wrong. He is not the patron of falsehood and robbery and treason and rebellion. If our cause fail it will not be because it is not just, nor because it has not the Divine blessing. *It will be because we are recreant to our trust*, because we lack the virtue for the service to which God has called us. Their's was a noble service who purchased the liberty we have for eighty-five years enjoyed. What tributes of gratitude and praise have since gone up to heaven for their mighty deeds. On what scenes of gladness, the fruits of their brave deeds, have their departed spirits looked down and smiled. Our's is a nobler service still. Their's was the ship upon the stocks—our's is the ship at sea, laden with a precious freight. They guarded the little seed—we the tree laden with blossoms, just ready to produce abundant fruit. We bear into the strife the interests of thirty millions of people in our own land, the interests of the down-trodden and oppressed of every land, the interests of posterity, the interests of liberty, of education, of religion throughout the world. Our's is a solemn work. Let us perform it in a solemn, God-fearing spirit. If we are faithful, what glorious rewards await us. What blessings will descend upon posterity, what thanksgivings will ascend to God for our service when we are in our graves. If we are faithless, we shall entail a curse upon the world and our memory shall be accursed. If we are faithless, then let the world never know that we have lived. Let the monuments which tell of the great deeds of our fathers be destroyed. Let Bunker Hill and Lexington and Concord and Trenton and Saratoga and Yorktown be forever forgotten. Let the monument we have reared to-day be razed to its foundation. Let it not stand a monument to our shame, to tell to coming generations that we were too weak to keep what our fathers entrusted to our hands. Let oblivion engulf us all. Let not our memory be preserved, like that of Israel of old, as a warning of the fate of those who forsake God and perish.

APPENDIX.

Thursday, the 5th of December, 1861, was the day fixed upon for inaugurating the "Crooked Billet" Monument, at Hatborough, Montgomery county, in commemoration of those who fell at the Battle of the Crooked Billet, May 1st, 1778, and who were cruelly massacred by the British troops and Tories, led on by the Tories of the Revolution, residing in the vicinity. The day was most auspicious, calm and beautiful, the sun rendering it mild by his warm rays. The inaugural ceremonies were conducted at the base of the monument, in the forenoon, and as soon as the column was capped, and the urn being raised to its position, Rev. Dr. STEELE was called upon and addressed the Throne of Grace in a solemn prayer. Several patriotic and eloquent addresses were made by gentlemen, who were present by invitation of the Managers. The venerable and highly esteemed Dr. WM. DARLINGTON, celebrated for his scientific, historical, and literary attainments, and who is now in his eightieth year, but whose intellect is as vigorous, active, and bright as in his younger days, was present, and his lively conversation lent a charm and gave additional interest to the occasion. He was accompanied by two young ladies, direct descendants of General Lacey. The monument is beautiful, large and imposing, and stands upon a high bank overlooking the road. It consists of a plinth, five feet square and one foot thick, and a double base, all of Montgomery county marble; upon this rests a die, enriched with a projecting moulding, on which is the Latin motto, "*Defensores Libertatis per Insidias Abrupti*;" on the square below is engraved the inscription; above this is another die, bearing the coat of arms of the "Old Keystone State," in alto relievo; this is exquisitely beautiful and an admirably executed piece of workmanship—the horses are well proportioned and seem instinct with life, the head of the eagle has a beautiful curve, and all the parts are well worked out; rising from this second die is a well proportioned shaft or obelisk, nine feet high, on which is sculptured full sized cross-swords and a shield, in bold relief; upon the obelisk is a neat capitol, and the whole is surmounted with an urn, from which issues a flame. It stands some twenty-four feet high and is of the finest Italian marble from the base up. The monument will be surrounded by a wall and an iron railing.

INSCRIPTION ON THE MONUMENT.

Defensores Libertatis per Insidias Abrupti.

[The Defenders of Liberty slain by surprise.]

ON THE WEST FRONT.

CROOKED BILLET BATTLE, MAY 1, 1778.

GENERAL JOHN LACEY,commanding the American patriots who were here engaged in conflict
FOR INDEPENDENCE.

SOUTH SIDE.

The Patriots of 1776

ACHIEVED OUR INDEPENDENCE.

Their Successors

ESTABLISHED IT IN 1812.

We are now struggling

FOR ITS PERPETUATION IN 1861.

"The Union must and shall be Preserved."

EAST SIDE.

A GRATEFUL TRIBUTE

by the

HATBOROUGH MONUMENT ASSOCIATION,

CHARTERED AND ERECTED

A. D. 1861.

NORTH SIDE.

IN MEMORY OF PATRIOTIC

JOHN DOWNEY,And others who were cruelly slain on this ground, in the struggle for
AMERICAN LIBERTY.

Dr. WILLIAM DARLINGTON, of West Chester, a son-in-law of General Lacey, being present and called upon, addressed the audience briefly, thanking the people of the neighborhood for the patriotism they had shown by the erection of a beautiful monument, and said it was chiefly owing to the energy of the gallant Colonel of the 104th Ringgold Regiment,* Pennsylvania Volunteers, and his friends, that this enterprise, which we had been called upon to-day to consummate, had been commenced.

General JOHN DAVIS replied that he could not permit it to go forth, that his family were the only ones prominent in this movement, that where all had acted so nobly all should share the praise—that to the ladies of Hatborough and vicinity they were principally indebted; it was to them, who had labored so assiduously and earnestly in this good work, that the managers were enabled to complete the enterprise.

* Col. W. W. H. Davis, who was the prime mover in the enterprise to raise this monument.

The Rev. Mr. TOLAND, of Chestnut Hill, was present and added his testimony in favor of what had been done by the patriotic sons of patriotic sires, to perpetuate the memory of the gallant brave who had given up their lives on that sacred spot. He was glad to see before him the veterans of the war of 1812; Dr. Darlington, a Major, and Gen. John Davis, a Captain of that war; they were connecting links that bind the past with the present, that unite the patriotism of 1812 and 1861, the defenders of Liberty against foreign aggression, and the protectors of that liberty against a wicked and causeless rebellion. The olden scenes of 1776 were being enacted over again by those brave spirits who have obeyed their country's call and are now at the seat of war. Those who had professed to be our brethren were now in open rebellion against us, and attempting to overthrow the Constitution and the Government.

Rev. Mr. HAND was also glad to add his testimony to what had already been said. He congratulated the community upon what had been accomplished. This was a fitting and beautiful testimonial to the brave men, who in the dark days of the Revolution had risked their all, and some had even given up their lives upon that field to secure our liberties. The events of this day were encouraging to those who were now in the service of their country. They had gone forth upon a sense of duty to crush this spirit of rebellion, and a grateful people would reward them. Those who fell upon this spot little thought they would have their names handed down to posterity and their deeds live in imperishable marble; over eighty years have passed away and they are not forgotten.

It may not, perhaps, be out of place, here, to add the following summary of General LACEY's personal history:

JOHN LACEY, Jr., son of John and Jane Lacey, was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, on the 4th day of February, 1755. His great grandfather, William Lacey, was among the earliest settlers under William Penn, and emigrated from the Isle of Wight, England. His family were plain Quakers; and the subject of these notes was educated among the straightest of the sect. But when the clouds were gathering, which portended the storm of the Revolution, young Lacey promptly took position in the ranks of the patriots, and was chosen "*Standard Bearer*" in the Second Battalion of the Bucks County Militia. Before he reached the age of 21 years, he received from the Continental Congress a commission as

"Captain in the 4th Battalion of Pennsylvania Troops, in the Army of the United Colonies, raised for the defense of American Liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof. Signed by order of Congress.

"JOHN HANCOCK, President.

"Attest, CHAS. THOMSON, Secretary.

"*Philadelphia*, January 6th, 1776."

This 4th Battalion (or Regiment) was commanded by Colonel ANTHONY WAYNE, of Chester county. Captain Lacey's company, in the ensuing spring, was marched, with the Regiment, to the Canada frontier, where he remained on duty with it until the close of the campaign; when, in consequence of a misunderstanding with the Colonel, he resigned his commission. So far, however, was the Captain from leaving the service, he was soon appointed

by the Pennsylvania Legislature, one of the sub-Lieutenants of Bucks county, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; and was actively employed in organizing the Militia of the county.

In the autumn of 1777, when the British had got possession of Philadelphia, they sent a strong foraging party to the west side of the Schuylkill, where the Americans were posted, near the Gulf Mills. Lieutenant Colonel Lacey was there in command of a regiment, when a severe engagement took place. A portion of the Militia acquitted themselves with credit. General Potter, who was in command, speaking of the affair, said:—"My people behaved well; especially those regiments commanded by the Colonels Chambers, Murray, and Lacey. His Excellency (Washington) returned us thanks in General Orders."

On the 7th of January, 1778, the Council met at Lancaster, and ordered that Colonel Lacey take the command of the Militia of this State, which may be stationed between the Schuylkill and Delaware, until further orders.

Two days afterward, President Wharton wrote as follows:

"LANCASTER, January 9, 1778.

SIR,—You are this day appointed to be a Brigadier General of this State; and the Secretary will, by Colonel Hart, forward to you a commission, empowering you to act as such.

"To Brigadier General LACEY, at Camp."

At this date, the juvenile Brigadier—appointed to relieve General Potter—was not quite 23 years of age! His duty was, to cut off supplies, and prevent all illicit intercourse between the disaffected country people and the enemy in the city. The British officers denounced vengeance on the troops thus employed, and swore they would speedily have the young General in their possession, dead or alive. General Lacey had a most arduous and ungracious duty to perform, among his Tory neighbors, and old acquaintances,—some of whom never forgave him; but he acquitted himself vigorously—with a fluctuating force, continually varying from some 40 or 50, to about 500 men,—until the unfortunate surprise of his camp, at the Crooked Billet, on the morning of the 1st of May, 1778. In the beginning of June, following, General LACEY was relieved of his anxious charge, by the return of General Potter to the command of the district; and in a few days thereafter the British army vacated Philadelphia.

General LACEY, nevertheless, continued to serve as a Brigadier of Militia, until near the close of the Revolutionary contest; and his Brigade was repeatedly called out, by threatening events. While in this command (viz: in January, 1781), he married Miss ANASTASIA, daughter of Colonel THOMAS REYNOLDS, of New Jersey,—a gentleman descended from an Irish family, in Dublin; and soon afterward he engaged extensively in iron works, on the Rancoons creek, at the village known as the New Mills, (now Pemberton,) in the county of Burlington. In this pursuit,—and occasionally in public life, as a Magistrate and Legislator,—General LACEY continued until his decease, on the 17th of February, 1814, aged 59 years.

General LACEY, at his death, left four children,—three daughters and one son:—

His eldest daughter was married to William L. Smith, of Burlington county, N. J.

His second daughter " " Dr. William Darlington, of West Chester Pa.

His youngest daughter " " Jonathan Hough, of Burlington county, N. J.

His son, Thomas R. Lacey—the only survivor—resides at Mount Holly, Burlington co., N. J.

His descendants are not numerous; but they have been privileged to see the rise of a great and magnificent Republic,—as well as to witness the outbreak of the most wanton and wicked rebellion that the world ever saw. They have mostly inherited the loyal spirit of their ancestor,—and some of them are now engaged as officers in the great Volunteer army, devoted to the defence of the Government, which their grand-sire aided to establish.

ESTO PERPETUA!



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